

PLAIN TRUTHS,

Earnestly Recommended

TO THE

SERIOUS ATTENTION

OF

THE READER.

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. Prov. iv. 7.

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NO words can declare, no fancy can paint,
What rage and despair, what hopeless complaint,
Fill Satan's dark dwelling, the prison beneath ;
What weeping and yelling, and gnashing of teeth !
Yet sinners will choose this dreadful abode ;
Each madly pursues the dangerous road ;
Tho' God give them warning, they onward will go,
They answer with scorning, and rush upon woe.
How sad to behold the rich and the poor,
The young and the old, all blindly secure !
All posting to ruin, refusing to stop ;
Ah ! think what you're doing, while yet there is hope !
How weak is your hand, to fight with the Lord !
How can you withstand the edge of his sword ?
What hope of escaping for those who oppose,
When hell is wide gaping to swallow his foes !
How oft have you dared the Lord to his face !
Yet still you are spared to hear of his grace ;
O pray for repentance and life-giving faith,
Before the just sentence confign you to death.
It is not too late to Jesus to flee,
His mercy is great his pardon is free !
His blood has such virtue for all that believe,
That nothing can hurt you, if him you receive.

PLAIN TRUTHS.

THAT "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," is the unerring testimony of the sacred scriptures, established and confirmed by daily experience. Who is there, from the youngest child capable of reflection to the man of gray hairs, that can affirm he hath not seen evil? "For what hath a man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? All his days are sorrows, and his travel grief." Eccl. ii. 22, 23.

The word of God, at the same time, assures us, that "affliction cometh not out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;" but that every event which befalls the children of men, is exactly according to Divine appointment. So that the question put by the prophet, Amos iii. 6. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" admits of universal application.

It seems impossible to account for this appointment of Divine Providence on any other principle, than that man is a sinful and guilty creature. The wretchedness and misery, then, under which man has groaned from the beginning, must be traced to the introduction of sin into the world. For "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death hath passed upon all men; for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. Our present miseries have a direct tendency to natural death; and if the grace of God do not interpose, must finally issue in eternal death.

Who will be bold enough to say, that the LORD JEHOVAH is unjust in this procedure? Is not *sin* direct rebellion against his person and government? and is he not bound by his very nature to punish it? Justice is an essential perfection in the Divine character. The holy law of God will not overlook one transgression. Its curse extends to "every one who continueth not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. iii. 10. "In all this the judgment of God is according to truth." Rom. ii. 3. He is just when he judgeth, and clear when he condemneth. "Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19.

It is owing to inattention to these plain and obvious truths, and to the unbelief of them, that men so calmly harden themselves in their iniquity; and say, "they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their own hearts." It is impossible, however, for a guilty creature to enjoy uninterrupted peace. While the conscience of man is not, as the Scripture expresses it, "seared with a hot iron," I Tim. iv. 2. he must sometimes at least feel "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. x. 27. And in spite of the various methods taken to quiet inward alarm, he dreads the prospect of "falling into the hands of the living God." ver. 31.

The Gospel of the LORD JESUS CHRIST reveals the remedy, of JEHOVAH's own providing, for the misery and wretchedness of guilty sinners. This Gospel is glad tidings of great joy. It manifests, that there is "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." It shows us, in what manner the justice of God is satisfied, the demands of his law answered, and a way of access opened to the Father. In short, it is the message of reconciliation, declaring, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. For he made him, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ, to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 19. 21.

Although the glorious Gospel of the blessed God be accompanied with evidences of authenticity, such as

must fully satisfy any mind open to conviction, that it is no cunningly devised fable ; yet many reject it, while they never have been at the smallest pains to examine its evidence. " The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." John i. 5. In them is that Scripture awfully verified : " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Others there are who do not openly reject the gospel, who even at times seem disposed to hearken to it ; but, from day to day put off the serious consideration of the truth, in hopes of enjoying a more convenient season at some future period. For the sake of such are these pages written ; and with them we would affectionately exhort on the folly of their conduct ; beseeching the Lord to open their hearts to conviction.

BRETHREN,

We are naturally disposed to look forward to many years, which we fondly hope to enjoy in this world. Notwithstanding the many instances of sudden death, every man evades the thought that he himself probably may in a moment be hurried away from the busy scenes of life to the judgment-seat of God. " Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years ; eat, drink, and be merry," is the language of many, while they do not consider, that, even while they are uttering the presumptuous boast, their soul may be required of them.

" A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." It is surely wise to stand prepared for the worst event. Nothing is more certain, than that we must sicken and die. The particular period is indeed hid from us. But that very circumstance forms the strongest argument for being always ready.

You do not deny, that " we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. In the knowledge of a truth so awfully important, how cri-

minal to pass away your time, unconcerned for the event, while you know not but to-morrow you may be called to give account of yourself to God !

There is something awfully solemn in the thought of stepping into eternity. To appear in the presence of God, in the world of spirits ; and to have our portion assigned, either in eternal glory or everlasting misery, must fill the mind, not entirely asleep and insensible, with deep concern. You have found it impossible at times, to evade the suspicion, that the word of God is true, and that it holds forth these things in the clearest manner : How then have you been able to live at ease, with such truths staring you in the face ?

With all due respect, and with the most affectionate concern, we would address the *Aged* on this most important of all subjects.—The Lord hath spared you for many years, and has had long patience. You have been, it may be, often warned by the servants of the Lord, to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on eternal life. By the visitations of Providence on yourself, your friends or acquaintances, you have also been called to attend to “the things that belong to your peace.” During the many years you have lived, you have seen much of the vanity of this world. Your fathers, where are they ? All the companions of your youthful days, are probably removed from you. Connections the most tender and endearing have been broken, and you have been disappointed in your most flattering expectations. Call to mind the death-bed scenes you have witnessed ; the agonizing groans and fearful forebodings of your departing friends ; and think, O seriously think, on the improvement you should have made of such solemn dispensations of Providence.

Aged friends, we are persuaded you have not lived so long in this transitory world, without occasional thoughts of futurity ; and perhaps you hope that all will be well with you when you die. But permit us to ask, in the bowels of Christian compassion, Upon what foundation are your hopes built ? The Scriptures tell us of “refuges of lies that shall be swept away.” Isa. xxviii. 17. It is awfully dangerous to mistake in a matter of so much im-

pertance. Did you ever call your hope in question? Were you at any time afraid it would not abide the test? Be entreated to bring it to the light of the sacred Scriptures. By the word of God you shall at last be judged. It is of no consequence what *your* opinions may be, if they do not accord with the oracles of God. A pannel is not dismissed from the bar of an earthly tribunal, because he pleads *not guilty*. A man in the rage of a fever is not less under its influence because he dreams he is in perfect health. In like manner, your good opinion of yourselves will stand you in no stead, if it be not founded on the infallible word of God.

Are you seriously disposed to ask, What is the nature of that hope which shall not be disappointed? May the Lord open your understanding, while we attempt to lead you to the Scriptures for an answer to the important question!

While the Lord declares, that the refuges of lies in which men vainly trusted shall be swept away, he at the same time faith, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Isa. xxviii. 16. This foundation you will find by consulting Psal. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. is the LORD JESUS CHRIST.—In a matter of so much importance, be entreated not to pass on without consulting and seriously considering the scriptures to which you are referred.—The Lord Jesus Christ is "the true God and eternal life." 1 John v. 20. Man has sinned, and it is impossible for him to offer any sacrifice by which sin can be expiated. The amazing plan of the "manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh," was in the depths of infinite wisdom adopted, as the only way of redeeming guilty sinners. He accordingly assumed our nature, yielded to the law a perfect obedience, and thus "magnified and made it honourable." Having lived three and thirty years, giving the most complete evidence, that he was indeed the Messiah, "all things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him," being exactly fulfilled, he bore the sins of his people on his own body on the tree. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God

in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. It "pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief; he made his soul an offering for sin; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed." Thus, as "by the disobedience of one man, many are made sinners, by the obedience of one are many made righteous." Rom. v. 19.

The righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the only sure foundation for the hope of a guilty sinner; it is that which alone can stand in the great day of the Lord. With it nothing can or needs to be joined to make it more complete. And when the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, the righteousness of Christ appears a solid foundation for confidence in the fight of God. The Scriptures assure us that those who build upon it, shall "not be confounded or ashamed."

The word of God "commendeth itself to every man's conscience." If you seriously consider these truths as in the presence of God, we are persuaded you will not be able to evade their force.

But perhaps you say, Who is there who does not believe them? Alas, if such be your opinion, it is a melancholy sign of your ignorance. We are naturally disposed to establish a righteousness of our own, and in that to trust for acceptance with God. Those who indeed are brought to the knowledge of the truth can generally discern the manner in which they were broken off from their false confidence. They remember the time when they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." But they are now convinced, "that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the fight of God." And therefore "rejoice only in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3.

It is probable you still allege that you already know and believe these doctrines. If you *indeed* believe them, you will live under their influence. Is this the case? Let your conscience answer the interesting question. If we have faith in Christ, we also partake of the Spirit of Christ. Read the Bible, and you will learn this truth almost from every page. "If any man be in Christ he is

a new creature ; old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. If your heart has never been deeply concerned about this matter, it is to be feared, you are still totally unacquainted with experimental religion.

With the most affectionate concern, then, very dear brethren, we beseech you immediately to lay these things to heart. " There is but a step between you and death." Your life is uncertain. Disease may soon waste your strength, and render you incapable of attending to the means of instruction. When God requireth your soul, you cannot by any means resist him. " There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit." Eccl. viii. 8. And how awful, if driven away in your wickedness ! If you die in your sins, there is no possibility of being afterwards delivered from them. The Scriptures tell us, that the wicked " go away into everlasting punishment." Mat. xxv. 46. How extremely foolish to run the hazard of enduring the wrath of God and the Lamb, in the hopes that it shall only be for a season ! We have not the smallest ground for such an expectation from the word of God: and shall we madly delude ourselves, in a matter so awfully important, on mere imagination ? — To you the gospel is still preached ; but " the word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith in them that hear it. " Believe then in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." " Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have eternal life." " Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." — Why should you die ? Why reject the counsel of God against yourselves ? How shall you " escape, if you neglect so great salvation ? "

But we now, with equal affection and solicitude, address our dear *Young Readers*. It may be you imagine that what you have read may do well enough for the aged ; but that it is yet time enough for *you* to attend to such things. Yield not, we beseech you, to this infatuation. Who told you you should attain the age of your fathers ? Doth disease attack only the old and infirm ? Are not many summoned to the judgment-seat

of Christ in the vigour of youth ? O be entreated then to attend to the things that belong to your peace. Read the holy Scriptures. It is impossible to prove that the Bible is not the revelation of the mind and will of God to men : and if it be, how highly does it concern you, to give earnest heed to its important instructions ! If then you have any regard to your own happiness, any desire to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and to be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, hear, we beseech you, the kind expostulations of that God against whom you have rebelled. " Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice ? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the path. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call ; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom ; and ye fools be ye of an understanding heart." Prov. viii. 1.—5. " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live." Isa. lv. 1.—3. " All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation : to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. What condescending goodness is displayed in these, and in many similar passages of sacred Scripture ! May the LORD himself open your heart to attend to them !

Fools make a mock of sin ; and when men do so, it is no marvel if they also turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into scorn and ridicule. My young reader, beware of such conduct. It is extremely dangerous. Nothing more directly tends to harden the heart. " See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven."

Jesus "alone hath the words of eternal life." He makes you welcome to come to him as you are. "Come unto me, saith the compassionate Saviour, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He complains, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Why reject the affectionate calls of your kind Redeemer? His "yoke is easy, and his burden light." "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." With the wicked it is not so. The way of transgressors is hard. Misery and wretchedness are inseparably connected with a course of iniquity in this world; and, if the grace of God do not interpose, must finally issue in eternal death in the world to come.

You discover anxiety about your temporal conveniences, "what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and wherewith you shall be clothed." If you be so careful in the little concerns pertaining to the body, surely those of the soul are infinitely more important. It is comparatively of little moment, in what manner we are accommodated during the few years of our abode on earth: But what shall become of our souls in the eternal world, is an object of inexpressible magnitude.

But perhaps you imagine, that a regular decent deportment will entitle you to the favour of God. In this you shew your ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God. Have you not read, that an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." This is not the case with a few of the more vicious only, but is a just description of the heart of man without exception. "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Seriously ponder in your heart this interesting truth, and we are persuaded you will be convinced that if God were to mark your iniquity you could not stand before him.

When the worldly affairs of the ungodly prosper to their wish, and they are not in trouble as other men,

pride (to use the emphatic language of the Scripture) compasseth them about as a chain ; their eyes stand out with fatness ; they imagine they have more than their heart could wish. In arrogancy of spirit, they even set their mouth against the heavens.—But how transitory their poor enjoyment ! “ Surely thou, O LORD, didst set them on slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment ! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh ; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.” Psal. lxxiii. May this awful scene never be realized in you, my dear reader !

But if you be determined after all to live in careless insensibility, you must abide the consequences of your folly. Your infidelity cannot frustrate the purpose of God. He is no respecter of persons. He will execute his threatenings. He that believeth not *shall* be damned. O remember that He is able to kill and to destroy. And who among us can endure the wrath of God and the Lamb ?

With all the affectionate concern, then, which our hearts ought to feel in a matter so peculiarly important, we earnestly entreat you to study the Holy Scriptures for yourselves. The advantages of doing so, with a humble and teachable spirit, exceed conception. If you at present feel your heart disposed to make the attempt, we beseech you immediately to do it. Who knows what happy effects may follow ?

May the Lord mercifully enlighten your understanding ! May he draw you to himself ! May he, according to the riches of his grace, deliver you from this present evil world, and prepare you for the enjoyment of himself in everlasting glory !

THE END.